

MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

July 7, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Place: MDOT Administration Building Auditorium

Meeting was called to order at 1:40 pm by Chairman George Phillips.

Commission Members Present:

MDOC	Chris Epps
Mississippi Chiefs of Police	Richard O'Bannon
Mississippi Sheriff's Association	James Newman
SafeCity Initiative	Mark McCrerry
Mississippi Fire Chiefs' Association	Tom Lariviere
Supervisors Association	Joel Yelverton
Department of ITS	David Litchliter
Mississippi Department of Health	Brian Amy
Mississippi DPS	George Phillips
Mississippi Highway Patrol	Marvin Curtis
Mississippi Homeland Security	Ed Worthington
Mississippi DOT	Willie Huff
MDEQ	Charles Chisolm
Mississippi Municipal League	Shari Veazey (representing Gene McGee)

Advisory Members Present:

Representative Clayton Smith	Senator Tom King
Representative Johnny Stringer	Senator Jack Gordon
Representative Tyrone Ellis	Senator Tommy Robertson
Representative Walter Robinson (representing Percy Watson)	Senator Robert Huggins

Chairman George Phillips called the meeting to order at 1:40 pm. He opened with statements addressing integrity, and requested that commission members no longer speak with vendors individually. All meetings with vendors should be held as a group.

Willie Huff stated that the commission is welcome to meet at the MDOT building for future meetings. It is a central location for everyone.

Chairman Phillips reminded everyone that the RFP is confidential and should not be viewed by anyone other than the commission members.

Charles Chisholm introduced a discussion about meeting times and proposed that the commission have regular meeting times each month. Chairman Phillips recommended a meeting on the first Thursday of every month. Senator Tommy Robertson made the motion to accept the future meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Charles Chisholm and passed with none opposed.

David Litchliter introduced Kenneth Dulaney from the Gartner group, a consulting company contracted by ITS, who gave a presentation on issues to consider when choosing a wireless network. He stated that the wireless network must be uniform for everyone to use it. The commission was urged to consider a series of networks instead of one large network. Mr. Dulaney stated that it would be difficult to achieve 100 percent coverage in Mississippi because of cost. The commission was advised that it should consider both commercial carriers as well as proprietary.

Questions were asked of Mr. Dulaney about how to achieve 100 percent coverage. He recommended either purchasing a proprietary system and allowing one of the vendors to manage it, or giving money to one of the vendors to expand their commercial network, which would benefit everyone in the state. Mr. Dulaney also stated that BlackBerry, a wireless device for managing data as well as use as a cell phone, is very government oriented.

Chris Epps reminded everyone that the RFP must cover all aspects of the system, but each part of the system can be purchased separately when the money is available.

Chairman Phillips stated that a vendor would be interested in spending money to improve their system if they knew the state would contract with them.

A discussion was held about the different radio systems used state wide and how they could be made to talk to each other. Senator Jack Gordon stated that there are approximately 40 different radio systems across the state, and it is unknown how many can talk to each other.

Chairman Phillips requested that all other questions of Mr. Dulaney be held until after the meeting.

David Litchliter introduced Julian Allen with the Mississippi Automated System Project (MASP) on the coast. Mr. Allen stated that the problem is not lack of technology, but lack of money. His ASP project is end-user driven. This system allows agencies to share resources for a small amount of money. The project consists of two servers; one in Hattiesburg and one in Pascagoula. Each agency has a block on the server to store data. Only the agency that owns the block can manage the data, but everyone on the server can view the data. This is called centralized data sharing. The ASP project is web-based which makes it easy to use. The more agencies on the system, the cheaper it is for everyone. The ASP project is federally funded with 25 million dollars for three counties. Mr. Allen encouraged the commission to conduct a needs analysis before doing anything else. Mr. Allen recommended that data and voice never be on the same network, because if the system failed, no one would be able to communicate through voice or data.

Chairman Phillips directed everyone's attention to the draft of the notification letter to state and local government entities, which had been passed out before the meeting. He asked if anyone had any questions. Joel Yelverton referenced the wording "...delay wireless expenses until further notice..." and asked how long that delay would be. David Litchliter answered that it was unknown at this point. Mr. Yelverton recommended that the wording "...significant costs..." be defined. Mr. Yelverton also cited the wording "...process to approve..." and asked what that process would be. Chairman Phillips answered that the agency would present the planned expense to the commission and

then vote on the project. Mr. Yelverton expressed a concern that the commission may not have enough information about each agency's needs to make an informed decision about what they need.

It was discussed among Senator Tom King, Joel Yelverton and Chairman George Phillips that it will be difficult to tell the agencies that they must not spend money on wireless systems. Chairman Phillips reminded everyone that it is not an option to inform the agencies, but state law requires that the commission inform each agency. Willie Huff made a motion to accept drafts of the letter by email for 10 days and vote by email at the end of that period. Joel Yelverton seconded, and the motion passed with none opposed.

Mark McCreery expressed a concern that the commission does not really know what is being spent and what is being planned around the state. A discussion of this matter followed. Chairman Phillips stated that adding a request for information about costs and plans related to wireless systems could be added to the letter.

Joel Yelverton asked the question of whether or not data was included in wireless communication. David Litchliter responded that it is included. Mr. Yelverton stated that this matter should go through the administrative procedures process. A discussion followed as to whether or not the administrative procedures process should be applied in this case.

Willie Huff made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Colonel Marvin Curtis seconded, and the motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Phillips proposed that the commission send out a short letter explaining the new law and put the agencies on notice that they should contact the commission before spending money on wireless equipment. Joel Yelverton made a motion to accept the proposal. Willie Huff seconded, and the motion carried with none opposed.

Chairman Phillips stated that the dates of the next meeting have been set. He asked whether or not the commission was ready to hear presentations from the vendors. Willie Huff stated that in order to hear all of the vendors, the commission will need to meet more than once a month. Chairman Phillips agreed and will set a meeting date before the next scheduled meeting. David Litchliter recommended that we give the vendors ample time to prepare for the presentation and give them a list of topics to address during their presentations.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.